

Where to Get Your Wine Fix in Zinfandel-Crazy Dry Creek

Ian White | Photo: Courtesy of Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley | September 16, 2015

Zinfandel is the dominant grape in these parts, but the valley's vintners also have a nose for grenache and traditional Italian varietals.



Dry Creek Valley has been fertile ground for vintners for more than 140 years, but only now is it finally entering the limelight. Bookended by posh Healdsburg and quaint Geyserville, bordering trendy Russian River and Alexander valleys, this alluring region has one of the densest populations of old-vine zinfandel in the world. Here are our top picks for where to wine, dine, and recline at the end of a strenuous day of tasting and toasting in Dry Creek.

Wine

[Bella Vineyards and Wine Caves](#) produces small lots of dusty, juicy, silky wines. The hospitality and vibe at Bella are welcoming and warm, but they like to keep things intimate—the maximum group size is eight.

Established in 1979, [Fritz Underground Winery](#) makes smooth wines using gravity-flow winemaking. Check out the cave and facility tour before relaxing on the garden patio.

Known for its commitment to the environment and biodynamic farming, [Quivira Vineyards](#) is surrounded by gardens, flowers, and streams. Quivira makes a slew of worthy wines, but be sure to try the grenache, which is layered with flavors of strawberry and spice.



[Seghesio](#) is all about food-driven wines and, of course, zinfandel. Founder Edoardo Seghasio planted his first zin vines in 1895, and the winery still honors those origins 120 years later, alongside a generous list of traditional Italian varietals. The chef also makes a killer pairing menu on weekends.

For those who know Dry Creek Valley and are looking to dig a little deeper, here are three more off-the-beaten-path picks:

The [Zichichi Family Vineyard](#) ensures that the wines reach their full potential by handpicking all of their grapes, aging the wines for 20 months in French oak, and sparing no expense on the winemaking process. This same meticulous and thoughtful approach extends to the guest experience at this family-owned winery.

A boutique winery of only about 1000 cases, [Vineyard of Pasterick](#) hosts guests in a lavish but cozy room deep in the wine caves. They offer tasting seminars for all guests, which feature a chocolaty Syrah and a creamy, rich Viognier.

Bring lunch along and picnic at the mountaintop tasting grounds at [Gustafson Family Vineyard](#). You'll try your pick of their 10 wines while gazing out at expansive views of the Dry Creek Valley. And if you can't bring yourself to leave, you can rent the luxurious vineyard guesthouse.

Dine

At [Barndiva](#) in Healdsburg, the vibe may be chic and lofty, but the cuisine is local and earthy. Known almost as much for their creative cocktails and fresh juices as they are their healthy menu, this farm-to-table staple can please everyone from vegans to carnivores.

While the menu at Charlie Palmer's [Dry Creek Kitchen](#) in Healdsburg may seem simple, the preparation and flavors are complex and robust. Consider ordering the seasonal tasting menu, and go ahead and add the wine pairings if you're staying nearby or taking a cab.

[Dry Creek General Store](#) is the spot for a grab-and-go breakfast or lunch. The fact that it's been there since 1881 speaks volumes, but it is also the most locally recommended stop for a quick bite.

[Valette](#) opened in Healdsburg this year and was just named one of *Wine Enthusiast's* top 100 wine restaurants in America. A sassy but down-to-earth eatery owned by two brothers, Valette is currently the talk of the town.

The menu changes every day at rustic [Diavola Pizzeria](#) in Geyserville, and the owners support local and sustainable everything. The pizza here is outstanding, but don't shy away from the wood oven-roasted halibut or buttermilk-fried-chicken panini.

The extensive menu at [Catelli's](#) in Geyserville features staples like garlic bread and burgers, along with fun dishes like organic truffle fries and clam, sausage, and calamari sauté. You can't go wrong here: There's something for everyone, and they do a fantastic job with wines by the glass.

Editors' note: *Be on the lookout for free corkage deals at some Dry Creek restaurants. Seventeen local eateries have partnered with more than 60 wineries to offer free corkage on wines purchased at the local tasting rooms. [Here's a list of participants.](#)*

Recline

Located directly above the Dry Creek Kitchen, [Hotel Healdsburg](#) is one of the most convenient locations in town. This posh but simple spot is perfect for those who like to shop and stay close to the action.

If you're looking for lots of space and a bit of history, [Madrona Manor](#) is perched on a hill above the valley and surrounded by eight acres of woods and elegantly landscaped grounds. Stay in one of the rooms in the mansion or book a cottage—just make sure to make time to enjoy the view and amenities.

[Bella De Jour Inn](#) is a sweet little bed-and-breakfast with doilies on the tables, wood floors, white walls, and cozy everything. They have a series of cottages to choose from and even offer sun-dried sheets and canopy beds.

If you prefer high design to frills, [Healdsburg Modern Cottages](#) bills itself as “a full glass raised to four modern design masters.” Each cottage is decorated to channel the sensibility of a different designer (Eileen Gray, George Nelson, and Ray and Charles Eames), and no corner is cut or expense spared.

For value shoppers, the [Best Western Dry Creek Inn](#) is clean, convenient, and a perfect spot for those who haven't pinned their hopes on lounging around a wine country resort.

<http://www.modernluxury.com/san-francisco/story/where-get-your-wine-fix-zinfandel-crazy-dry-creek#sthash.6Rk3uTtC.dpuf>